

MISHPATIM ♦ SERVANTS OF HASHEM

THE CONCEPT OF SERVITUDE: HAVING NOTHING FOR YOURSELF, AND EXISTING ONLY FOR HASHEM

Parshas Mishpatim begins with the laws of “*eved ivri*”, the Jewish slave. If the “*eved ivri*” does not wish to go free, the master must drill his ear, and he becomes a servant forever to the master. Rashi brings explains the *Gemara* that the ears which heard at *Har Sinai* that the Jewish people are servants of Hashem has allowed himself to get sold to slavery, therefore, these ears are drilled.

When the Jewish people left Egypt, we were redeemed from the house of slavery, from the house of Pharaoh, and we became instead the servants of Hashem. “*They are my servants, and they are not servants of servants.*”

On a deeper note, our status of slavery did not merely receive an upgrade from being servants of Pharaoh to being servants of Hashem;

it was a new status entirely and it was not the same kind of servitude. Not only did we become owned by a new Owner; our very servitude changed.

Hashem referred to Moshe as “*avdi*”, “My servant”, and he is also called *eved ne’eman*, trustworthy servant, of Hashem. He is the one who redeemed us from the house of slavery so that we could become the servants of Hashem. Moshe received the Torah at Sinai and gave it to Yehoshua. Moshe is the servant of Hashem and he did not receive the Torah for himself.

As soon as Moshe received the *Luchos*, Hashem said to him, “*Go, descend*” due to the sin of the Golden Calf. *Chazal* explain that all of Moshe’s greatness was given to him for the sake of the Jewish people, and since the Jewish people had sinned, Moshe was

told to descend from his exalted level. So Moshe is an *eved Hashem*, in the sense that he keeps nothing for himself (an *eved* is one who receives from his Master, who has nothing of his own). He received the Torah only to give it to *Klal Yisrael*. Thus, Moshe received the Torah and gave it to Yehoshua, for this is his entire essence – to receive the Torah in order to give it to *Klal Yisrael*.

Surely he had to attain a certain greatness in order to give over the Torah; the Torah could not merely be given over through a messenger. The Torah had to be passed on to mankind through a great person such as Moshe. Moshe’s greatness was the fact that he had nothing for himself, and he was entirely devoted to *Klal Yisrael*.

EVERYTHING COMES TO US BY MEANS OF HEAVENLY EMANATIONS THAT PASS THE HEAVENLY CHAIN

When we reflect deeper into how Hashem created the world, as the *Nefesh HaChaim* says, “The Sages say of Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa, “All of the world is sustained *b’shvil* (for the sake of) Chanina, my son, who subsists on a small measurement of grain”. Reb Chanina ben Dosa is but a *‘shvil* (path). All of Creation is a *‘shvil* – a means, a path, to transfer all of the Heavenly *shefa* to this world.

The Sages describe Creation as

entirely a *hishtalshilus* (the Heavenly ‘chain’), which acts as a pipeline by which Hashem sends all sustenance to the world. The Torah is called a “*derech*” (path), for it is written, “*Her ways are ways of pleasantness*”, because Torah is the “*derech*” which all *shefa* comes from; it is the means by which *shefa* from Heaven passes through *hishtalshelus*, the Heavenly “chain”, from realm to realm, until it comes into this lower realm, the world of action.

Just as all *shefa* passes from world to world until it can get to our world, so does this apply in terms of our own *nefesh* (soul). An example was Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov (who are also called the prince, father, and son). The *shefa* first came to Avraham, then it came into Yitzchok, and then into Yaakov. All *shefa*, which is really the light of Hashem, passes through realm to realm, and from soul to soul. That is the way creation is designed, and this is the concept of *hishtalshilus*.

The world *hishtalshilus* is from the word *shelo*, “his”. When something belongs to someone, it is *shelo*, “his”, because it comes to him due to *hishtalshilus*. Another example is inheritance. When a child inherits the parent, the acquisitions of the parent become passed onto him, and this is really because all of the *shefa* that comes to a child must pass through the father. The parent is a garment of the child’s soul, and therefore all *shefa* that comes to a child comes through the father.

The simple examples of *hishtalshilus* are the father-son relationship and the *rebbe-talmid* relationship, but if someone has great *ahavas Yisrael* to others, he is a root of *hishtalshilus* for others. Additionally, if someone possesses a *neshamah klali* (a collective soul), he is also a root of others’ souls and he transfers *shefa* to them. There

are other ways as well in which *shefa* can pass on to others.

In the inner workings of the Creation, everything is Hashem’s light, His *shefa*, which passes through the process of *hishtalshilus*, through various *shevilim* (paths). The root of these *shevilim* is the 12 *shevatim* (tribes). There were 12 different paths that led through the sea after it was split, and each tribe went through its own unique path. Each tribe received its own *shefa*, through its unique *shvil* (path), and that is why each tribe must have its own portion in the Land.

The 12 tribes are all unified under their one root, their father Yaakov *Avinu*, and in that root, they are all one. But in terms of *hishtalshilus*, they branched into 12 separate paths, after the exodus from Egypt. Thus there

were 12 different paths when they came to the sea. But these 12 paths were merely a way to get through the sea; they were not a means of owning the sea, for they were only passing through it and they were not permanent.

Chazal (in the *Sifrei*) teach that a member of Yisrael is called “*ivri*”, either because Avraham was called *ivri*, or because they were “*ovrei yamim*”, they can pass through the sea. The lesson of this is because the Jewish people pass through 12 different paths in order to receive *shefa*.

On a deeper note, all *shefa* comes to the world by means of the Jewish people, and therefore they are all called “*ivrim*”, from the word “*maavar*”, “passing through”, for everything “passes through” them.

THE ATTITUDE OF ‘OWNING’ THE WORLD

This is the way to view the Creation that Hashem has made. There is a superficial way to see the world, and there is an inner way to view creation. The superficial way to see creation is to see the external layer of things: Reuven owns his house and possessions, Shimeon owns his house and possessions, etc.

Owning something is not just a monetary status, but a perspective that one has, of viewing himself as the actual “owner” of something. When one has a family, he naturally will feel that he owns his family. After all, according to Torah law, a father was allowed to sell his daughter up until a certain age. A married

man is called the “*baal*” (husband/owner) over his wife, for he does have certain acquisition over her; he acquires her handiwork, so he is somewhat of an “owner” over her. A father is somewhat of an “owner” over his children, because if they find an object, it belongs to him; he does not completely own them, but he does feel like an owner over them.

On a more inclusive level, a person thinks he is the owner of his money and acquisitions, and this is really because as a person lives on this world, deep down he thinks that everything on this world belongs to him. *Avos D’Rebbi Nosson* states that there is a big world and a small world; the big

world is the Creation in front of us, and the small world is man, who is a microcosm of the entire universe. (Externally, man is a small world only when compared to the universe, but on his inner layer, man is really above the entire universe). Therefore, deep down, man thinks that the entire universe is contained in him, and that is the deeper reason of why he thinks that everything can belong to him.

Most people would deny this, and they would be ready to swear that they don’t feel this way. But the truth is that in the depths of one’s soul, a person thinks that everything must belong to him.

The Sages teach in *Avos* that one

says, “What is mine is mine, and what is yours is yours”, because deep down, a person thinks that everything is “mine”, and that even what is “yours” is really part of “mine”, because he thinks that everything must pass through his own share.

This attitude exists in every person, to different degrees, and the only question is how much it is manifest in each person; with some, this attitude is more obvious. Those who are more refined will only feel that “what is mine, is mine” and not more than that. But those who are less refined

will feel that not only “what is mine, what is mine”, but that even what is “yours” must be also be “mine”.

At what point does a person draw the line and become aware of the difference between what is “mine” and what is “yours”? That will depend on how much a person has purified his inner character. At the most extreme level, a person thinks that everything on the world is “mine”.

The *Gemara* says that there were several kings who ruled the entire world, and the inner understanding

of this is that they considered themselves to be owners of the entire world, which is the full realization of a king’s power, who “breaks fences, and no one can protest him.”

(This is not referring to King Shlomo, who was given permission to rule over both the higher and lower realms. This is only referring to all other kings who ruled over the entire world, who represent an attitude of thinking that the entire world belonged to them – an attitude that is contained deep in every soul.)

AVDUS/SERVITUDE: WE DO NOT OWN ANYTHING, FOR WE BELONG TO HASHEM

In contrast, the completely opposite attitude of the above is the concept of *avdus*, servitude. Hashem declared us as “*My servants*” - and not

the servants of servants”. The phrase “*My servants*” refers to the ability in the soul [which enables a person to view himself as completely for

Hashem, and to own nothing of his own].

“OWNERSHIP” ONLY EXISTS IN THE LOWER PERSPECTIVE

Of course, according to the definitions contained in the laws of *Choshen Mishpat* (the monetary laws of Torah), we certainly are the owners of our possessions, and if someone ignores these definitions *chas v’shalom*, he is liable for stealing and he will commit other transgressions of the Torah.

But we must also know that “the Torah speaks in the language of people”, which does not mean that the Torah conforms to the thinking and attitudes of people, but because the Torah descends from the higher realms into the lower realms, through the system of *hishtalshilus*; in the higher realms, the Torah applies on a higher level, and it speaks a higher language than this world. In the lower

realms, the Torah speaks a lower language; as an example, when the laws of Torah are followed, we merit the blessing of rain, which is only applicable to the physical realm. But the Torah speaks on a lower language only when it descends to the lower realms. The Torah contains the words “Pharaoh”, “Amalek”, and other wicked people, and the books of the Prophets speak about the wicked Nevuchadnezzar, who were all people that represent the most impure forces of evil; this is all because the Torah descends to the lower realms.

Similarly, there is a concept of “*din*” (the actual requirement of *halachah*) and there is the area of “*lifnim mishuras hadin*”, which are beyond the requirements of *halachah*.

A person who keeps only the *din halachah* but never goes beyond that, is keeping to the *din* only because he is found at that level. The *din* itself comes from the higher realms and extends into the lower realms; it will not be the same *din* for different people, because it depends on the level of the person. What is *din* for one person will be *lifnim mishuras hadin* for another person, and what is *lifnim mishuras hadin* for one person is *din* for another person.

The depth of this is because the Torah descends to the lower realms, and therefore it can apply on many levels. On the lowest level, there is “What is mine is mine, and what is yours is yours”, which is “*din*”, and almost all of the laws of *Choshen*

Mishpat are based upon this level. But *Chazal* in *Avos* teach us that there is a higher level: “What is yours is yours, but what is mine is also yours.” Reuven cannot force Shimon to comply to this level if Shimon isn’t on this level, but with regards to himself, if Reuven is capable of this level, that level is “*din*” for him.

To whom does it apply the higher

level of “What is mine is also yours?” It is applicable to a person who is aware of the system of *hishtalshilus* in Creation; namely, that the Torah extends from the higher realms and into lower realms.

When one is aware that everything in Creation serves as means for the *shefa* to pass through it, like a pipeline, or like a path (*shvil*), he

becomes aware of the very backbone of Creation’s design. *Chazal* state that the world was created “*b’shvil Yisrael*”, for the sake of the Jewish people, who are called the “beginning”, and the world was created “*b’shvil Torah*”, for the sake of the Torah, which is also called “beginning”. The Jewish people are the beginning, the *shvill* path which everything passes through in order to sustain the universe.

SEEING THE INNER LAYER OF CREATION

When this fact becomes clear to a person firstly on an intellectual level, a person will see a different picture when he looks at the world. Just as there is one source of water in a city which provides water to many homes through the many pipes that connect to it, so can we understand, *l’havdil*, that all of Creation consists of many “pipes” that transfer all of the “water”/ *shefa* from Hashem’s light throughout creation. This passing through all of many souls in creation is a very clear, true picture of how things really look like in creation.

When one becomes aware of this perspective in his mind, he becomes a new being, who sees a different Creation entirely than how others see it. He will no longer see things the way he used to see it. Instead of seeing a world in which there are differing levels of wealth and poverty, of those who own more and those who own less, of financial disputes that takes

place in *Bein Din*, and the areas that are all within the letter of the laws contained in *Choshen Mishpat*—which is only one side of life – a person with the deeper perspective described here will be able to see beyond this.

The *dinei Torah* in *Beis Din* which take place are an integral part of *Klal Yisrael*, and we cannot budge even one iota from any of the laws of *Choshen Mishpat*, *chas v’shalom*; but they are all only part of the external layer of life. There is a more inner layer to this world.

Just as a person has a body and a soul, and the body wears *tefillin* and it also receives *bris milah*, the main part of a person is his soul, and so too, there is an external layer to Creation and an inner layer to Creation, and the main part of Creation is its inner layer. The external layer of Creation is where the *dinei Torah* take place, and these are all true, but they are not the

main part of Creation.

They are called “*gufei Torah*”, the “body of Torah”, because they are the external layer of Torah, the outer “body” of Torah, and not the actual *neshamah* “soul” of the Torah. The soul of the Torah shows a person an entirely different perspective towards Creation.

The *gufei Torah* imply that a person can have ownership of this world, that he can own things or declare them ownerless. But the “soul” of the Torah, which is revealed to a person whose light of the *neshamah* has begun to shine, shows a different Creation.

It shows a person how everything in Creation are but pipelines that transfer the *shefa* from Hashem, throughout the creation. From that inner perspective, we do not own anything. It comes to us, but we do not own it.

LEAVING THE PERSPECTIVE OF “OWNERSHIP”: THE GATEWAY TO TRUE AHAVAS YISRAEL

When one absorbs this perspective, his entire attitude towards life changes. The attitude of “ownership” that he

has towards his money and financial assets will be greatly weakened.

Even more so, he will not feel

like an ‘owner’ in other areas as well. With this perspective, it will be much easier for him to avoid stress from

his family members. A person only becomes stressed out from family situations when he thinks that he's in charge of them and that he owns them, and therefore he is pained from them when they aren't acknowledging his 'ownership' of them. And a person only has stress from anything that has to do with his money, when he thinks

he 'owns' his money.

But if he does not view himself as an 'owner' to his family and all else that he has acquired, he will instead open up the gate of true *ahavas Yisrael*. True *ahavas Yisrael* means to view oneself as a pipeline which transfers Heavenly light to all others,

because he is connected to all others. True, he must first love his own family members, and they take precedence before all else; he must first help them before he helps anyone else. But this is only because he is the 'pipeline' to them – and not because he owns them.

REALIZING THE IMPLICATION OF BEING A "SERVANT" OF HASHEM

When one absorbs this perspective deeply - first in his intellect and then internalized in his heart - one can come to true *bittul* (self-nullification).

This is what brings a person to realize what is meant in the words, "My servants" - to become a true *eved* (servant) of *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. The depth of our *avdus* (servitude) to Hashem is not the Torah and *mitzvos* we must keep – that is but the result of our *avdus*. The root of the *avdus* is for a person to realize that we are nothing but a pipeline that transfers the *shefa* of Hashem to the rest of Creation. All of Creation serves a pipe to transfer all of the *shefa*, and the *avodah* upon me is to realize that I am a part of that system.

That being the case, one's children and grandchildren should not become the central part of his life that he thinks about all the time. Life is rather about a love for *am Yisrael*, a love for all of Creation, and to reveal the honor of Heaven upon this world. That is where all of the 'pipes' of Creation lead to. All of the paths that led through the sea after it were leading to the revelation of the Creator at the other end.

The more a person becomes aware of this perspective, in heart and mind, the more he will live a purified kind of life. He will live in Hashem's world, and not in the world of people.

The *Gemara* points out a contradiction between two verses:

One verse says "*To Hashem, belongs the earth and all that fills it*", which implies that the earth belongs to Hashem and not to people, but there is another verse, "*The heavens belong to Hashem, and the earth was given to man*", which implies that the world was given to man. The *Gemara* answers that before a person makes a *berachah*, everything is forbidden to him and it belongs to Hashem, but after making a *berachah*, it belongs to him.¹ But the deeper understanding of this is that when a person makes a genuine *berachah*, his *berachah* becomes a means of transferring the *shefa* of Hashem upon creation, and he is merely a 'pipe' through which it all passes through.

IN CONCLUSION

This is the truth about life, the inner design of Creation which Hashem has made in His wisdom. If someone lives with this perspective, by understanding it clearly in his mind and then internalizing it in his heart, then this knowledge becomes *daas*.

This perspective towards life enables a person to live in a cleansed state – he will be cleansed from various personal interests which blur his spiritual vision and which show him a world owned by people, not a world owned by Hashem. The 'pipes' will then be cleansed, and the light

of Hashem will then be able to pass through them, and then it will follow with the complete revelation of "*To Hashem, belongs the earth and all that fills it.*"

¹ *Berachos 35a*

MITZVOS AND OLAM HABA

Question:

How can the Rav say that we won't get into Olam HaBa if we don't desire to learn Torah, won't our other mitzvos help us get in?

Answer:

The Zohar says that our mitzvos are like a garment, while our Torah is our soul. If a person comes into the next world with just garments and no soul – he's like a body without a soul.

DOES CHESSED DISCONNECT US FROM MATERIALISM

Question:

The Chofetz Chaim writes in Ahavas Chesed that doing chesed is what sanctifies us on This World. If so, why can't that be enough to disconnect us from materialism? Why doesn't doing chesed accomplish this too?

Answer:

The goal is to use the physical world for the spiritual, but before we do that, we need to already develop the ability to disconnect from This World, and then we are able to sanctify physicality, such as through doing chesed. If a person doesn't disconnect from materialism, he will end up becoming attached to This World even as he's doing mitzvos. For example, there is a mitzvah of oneg Shabbos, but if a person is too attached to This World, he will end up becoming a glutton through oneg Shabbos. Therefore, we need to already develop beforehand the idea of disconnecting from materialism, so that we won't become too attached to This World when we have to be involved in it for the sake of mitzvos.

DEFINING PNIMIUS – INWARDNESS

Question:

1) Often the Rav speaks of a general definition "The more a person becomes inward (*pnimi*)."
What does the Rav mean by this, and what are the conditions for this? 2) In relation to the above question, is it possible for a person to become more pnimi/inward if he doesn't know well the Shulchan Aruch and halachah l'maaseh of the Poskim, at least in day-to-day living? It would seem that if a person isn't meticulous in the halachah, he cannot be a proper container to receive any spiritual illumination or pnimiyus – whether from the outside, or from within. Therefore, it would seem that the beginning of a person's avodah should be to first learn a lot of halachah, so that he can learn how to meticulously observe halachah, and thereby become a "container" and "basis" [to receive spiritual illumination], on a simple level. Only after this would it make sense for a person to become more "pnimi"! For if a person is becoming more "pnimi" but he isn't that careful with halachah, he is living a contradiction. My question becomes stronger based on what the Rav says in the introduction to Bilvavi Part 9, that a person needs to be very careful with halachah, as a necessary condition in order to gain from any of the content in the sefer, so that one can become a "container" to receive the light of emunah and the "light of Mashiach" [as explained in Bilvavi Part 9]. If a person is missing this condition, the Rav makes it clear that it is dangerous to learn the sefer, because the increase of spiritual light will damage him if he doesn't have the proper container to hold onto it. Therefore, before anything, a person needs to

be immersed in Torah and carefully observe halachah and keep the mitzvos. This warning is probably not only a condition to receive the light of Mashiach, but a general rule for all areas of Avodas Hashem. In simpler language: it should seem that if a person wants to become more internal, his first area to work on is to learn halachah very well and become very meticulous in observing each halachah of Shulchan Aruch, and he should place all of his focus on the careful observance of halachah. I am not even speaking of chumros (*being stringent*), but of fulfilling the halachah on a basic level, such as how to wash the hands properly, etc. Why is this not the definition of becoming a more internal person? Why does becoming more internal mean that one needs to "enter more inward" as the Rav puts it? Isn't the main thing to learn how to fulfill the will of Hashem, which is through fulfilling the mitzvos properly, as revealed to us through the holy Torah?

Answer:

1- There are three root pathways in Creation, and accordingly, there are three different approaches in avodah (*servicing the Creator*):

(1) One way to view our avodah is in terms of "igulim", circles – our avodah is like a circle within a circle. The outermost circle has the largest circumference from all of the circles. Accordingly, the avodah of a person is to come out of his circle and enter into the bigger circle outside of him. This implies that the avodah of a person is bittul, self-nullification.

(2) Another way of avodah is hishtalshelus, "chain". In this view, our avodah descends from the highest Heavenly realms all the way down to the lowest realm [and we begin from the lowest point and we need to work our way upwards to the highest point]. This implies that the avodah

of a person is to ascend higher, and this is the implication of the term “ben aliyah”, “one who ascends spiritually.”

(3) Another way of avodah is halbashah, “garment”. This means that the highest level is cloaked by the lowest level, as if the lower level is a garment for the higher level. It is like the layers of an onion, where the innermost layer is the choicest part of the onion. In this approach, the avodah of a person is to keep entering inward, and accordingly, one will need to identify what his main avodah is, according to the root of his soul.

2- Rabbeinu Yonah says in Shaarei Teshuvah that as long as a person accepts upon himself the words of the Sages, he is considered to be a total baal teshuvah (*penitent*), and it is considered as if he has done it all. That is why there is an avodah upon a person to take upon himself that he will fulfill every halachah with all its details. There is a lot to learn, and one needs to amass much knowledge about it, but as soon as one gets up from learning his sefer and he seeks to fulfill what he has learned, he is considered to be a total tzaddik. This is what the Ramban says in Iggeres HaRamban. For it is impossible for a person to learn all of the details of every halachah in a short amount of time, and if only an entire lifetime would even be enough to know all of it! When one does *[to fulfill all that he learns]*, he is connected to the holy realm of “Asiyah” (*action*), but beyond this, there is also a more inner realm, the realm of emotion, and beyond that, there is the realm of thought. Beyond that is the realm of Atzilus, which is d’veykus (*attachment in Hashem*). These are four realms, one of top of the other, and they are also each within the other.

The more that one enters inward *[into the higher realms, and all the way to the highest realm, atzilus/d’veykus]* the more “internal” one becomes.

GETTING THROUGH A DISMAL PERIOD

Question:

What is an example of a good point to hold onto when we are going through difficult times?

Answer:

Good question. There are two opposite powers in the soul: despair, and hope. When a person is in a going through a dismal period and he despairs, and he is too accepting of the despair, he is weakening the “fire” of his hope. The only thing a person needs to do, in order to access the power of tikva/hope, is for a person to know that “I will soon return to the way things were.” Practically speaking, a person should understand that his soul needs to go to “sleep” sometimes, just as the body needs sleep *[meaning that the soul isn’t able to perform at it best, during a dismal period]*.

Question:

So when a person is awakening the power of hope, there is nothing specific which a person needs to hope for?

Answer:

You only need to be on the proper level to do so, to have hope that you will certainly return to the way things were before, and that you can certainly succeed. This doesn’t meant to simply say “I hope” superficially, but to feel truly confident that Hashem will certainly help you succeed.

Question:

If a person gets sick and is physically not able to do anything, and he doesn’t even have a minute or two minutes a day to work on

the idea of increasing the power of “hope”, is there anything she can do, to grow right now?

Answer:

If he doesn’t have 2 minutes, he can still find half a minute for this.

Question:

The sick person can only think about hope, but he has no one to work on it together with and speak about. For example, he was used to learning every day with a chavrusa, and now that he is ill, he has no one to verbalize his hope with.

Answer:

So he can do it while learning alone.

Question:

But there are days when an ill person will find even this too difficult for him to do.

Answer:

He still has a second or where he can find time to work on this – in spite of the fact that the yetzer hora (*evil inclination*) is very strong.

Question:

If a person’s ratzon (*will*) dries up, how can he get it going again?

Answer:

During a dismal period, a person should not focus on action (*maaseh*) that much, and instead he should focus more on maintaining whatever willpower (*ratzon*) he has acquired until now. It will be too difficult for a person to “create” a ratzon now for more growth, now that his will for growth has stopped. But this much, he will still be able to do.

Question:

I have learned that a person needs to keep doing what he needs to do and to keep serving Hashem, even when he doesn’t feel like it and he has no enthusiasm or will to serve Hashem. For example, a person should daven to Hashem even if he doesn’t feel particularly enthusiastic about davening right now. But

according to what the Rav is saying here, it sounds like we need to keep awakening our emotion and will.

Answer:

Only a person who has reached a very high level of *pnimiyus* is able to do so. A person will never build his inner world if he serves Hashem without feeling. If a person has already developed his *pnimiyus*, then he is able to have times in which he serves Hashem even when he doesn't have any will. But for most people, it is not a proper approach to always serve Hashem without any feelings.

Question:

But perhaps the approach (*of action over emotion*) would work better for women, who are usually more action-oriented.

Answer:

Actually, it is the opposite. Since women are more usually emotional than men, they need to work more with their emotions, than with trying to act when they don't feel like it. By contrast, men, who are less emotionally inclined than women, are better equipped to do what they have to do even when they don't feel like it. But this doesn't either mean that men to need to act robotic and mechanical, with no feeling in what they do. Everyone needs to open their hearts. This

should not be about "doing what you have to do even when you don't feel like it."

Question:

Do we have any way of knowing when these "good times" or "bad times" will come?

Answer:

We do not have any control of when they come and go, but the more a person works on himself, the less the "bad times" will come, and the less intense they will be. But there is almost no one in the generation who never goes through these "bad times."

Question:

During a dismal period, a person wonders if he's going on the right path or not. How can person indeed know if he's going in the right path?

Answer:

During the "bad times", it is too difficult for us to know if we are going on the right path or not, so we will have to wait for the "good times" when we can think more objectively. During a dismal period, if a person feels that he needs to improve in certain areas or take a different path, it is usually coming from an unhealthy place in the soul, from feeling down and broken. So in order to analyze one's path, one will need to wait for the dismal period to pass, and analyze his path later,

when "good times" return.

Question:

How do you know if you're going through those "Bad Days"? Can it be that for two hours a day that you're going through "Bad Days?"

Answer:

"Bad Days" (*"Days of Hate"*) can last well beyond 2 hours or half a day. They can go on for several days, and sometimes they can even go on for several weeks. Sometimes you can feel physical aches from them. But if you feel like you're in a dismal period for more than a few months already, that's a sign that there is a problem. Then it is not just a period of "Bad Days" anymore – it is a sign of depression.

Question:

Why does our soul need to go through this state of "sleep", or "Bad Days"? And is there any way we can prolong our periods of "Good Days?"

Answer:

Hashem created the world that everything needs sleep, even our soul. Since our soul needs sleep, we need to also go through "Bad Days." There is nothing we can do about it. But the more we work on ourselves, the longer our "Good Days" will last.

